

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

committed it to His vicar. And if the vicar does not do what he should (and it is bad if he does not), we must humbly await the punishment and chastisement of the Supreme Judge, God eternal, even if our possessions are taken from us by these men. I pray you, in the name of Christ crucified, concern yourself no more with this. Possess your own cities in peace; punish your own subjects when they do wrong; but never touch those who are the ministers of this glorious and precious blood, which you can have by no other hands than theirs. Without it you will not receive the fruit of that blood, but you will become a putrid limb, cut *off* from the body of Holy Church. Now no more, father ; humbly would I have us put our head upon the lap of Christ in heaven in affection and love, and of Christ on earth, who holds His place, to show reverence for the blood of Christ, of which blood he bears the keys ; to whom he opens, it is opened, and to whom he shuts, it is shut; he has the power and the authority, and there is no one who can take it out of his hands ; because it has been given him by the first sweet Truth."

Let Bernabo, then, become a faithful son of the Church. " But what amends shall we make for the time that you have been outside ? For this, father, it seems to me that a time is preparing in which we shall be able to make sweet and gracious amends ; for, as you have disposed your body and temporal substance to every peril and death in war with your father, so now I invite you, in the name of Christ crucified, to true and perfect peace with that father, benign Christ on earth, and to war upon the infidels, preparing to give your body and substance for Christ crucified. Make yourself ready, for it befits you to make this sweet amends ; even as you have gone against him, so now go to his aid, when the Holy Father raises on high the banner of the most holy Cross. I wish you to be the first to invite and urge the Holy Father to make haste, for it is a great shame and disgrace to Christians to suffer wicked infidels to possess what by right is ours. But we act like fools and base of heart, who make war only upon each other ; we are divided